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Re: General situation in Lvov oblast, Ukr SSR, in 1964

Source: YARYSH, Maria Olena of Rochester, N.Y.

Date: 24 June 1964

1. Source is Ukrainian, aged approx. 60, in March 1964 arrived from SHCHYRETS', r-n PUSTOMYTY, obl. LVOV to ROCHESTER, N.Y. where she joined for good her husband and two sons.

Prior to her emigration to the States Source worked in the collective farm of SHCHYRETS', had a small household plot as any other "kolhospnik", went often to LVOV as she did some "speculation" there, and received parcels from her family in Rochester, N.Y.

Source is quite an intelligent woman, of mixed - half peasant, half townfolk stock, quite willing to talk but cautious with names and other details, She was interviewed by Dr P. on 18 Apr 1964 in Rochester, N.Y.

Arrangements for her emigration were made through Kovbasniuk-Agency of NYC and all proceedings lasted for about 1 year.

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1. SHCHYRETS', r-n PUSTOMYTY, oblast LVOV

Till 1963 the town was a rayon center. Now it has only silrada plus 1 militia man. There is also a small military garrison but Source was unable to say anything about it beside the assertion that most soldiers were Russian.

SHCHYRETS' has a distinctly Ukrainian population and character. There are only a few Russians in administration- and party apparatus. There are practically no Jews and Poles except for the chairman of the collective farm who is a Pole and a good man.

Director of the 8 grades school is Russian, so is director of the library. All subjects are taught in Ukrainian but Russian is obligotary.

Collective farm

The husbandry in the collective farm is very bad. Responsible for that are ~~xxx~~ authorities (the state) not the people in kolhosp. Too many changes of agricultural directives and plans. Thus, in 1962/63 the state ordered to cultivate pulse and maize but the soil for the latter was completely unsuitable in Shchyrets-region. No wonder that when farmers cultivated corn they had had much better yields.

Another handicap in kolhosps, in general and not obly in Shchyrets, is lack of young people willing to work. All try to get to factories and move to large cities. In Source's opinion agricultural work has been so much disliked that she doubted if many people would agree to keep their farms in case the collective farm should be disbanded. No one seems to be enthusiastic about working in the countryside (in collective farms) doing any kind of farming. Despite all the recent restriction on registration in cities some people managed to get there from the countryside.

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Factories

Shchyrets' has also a sawmill and a glass factory. Average wages there amount up to R 100.- which are in no comparison to much lower earnings in collective farm.

Hospitals

There is a small hospital and a Rail Road Infirmary. Source named two physicians from the hospital: Dr BYSIKO, fnu, Ukrainian and Dr SIKOLAS, fnu, Ukrainian.

Church

1962 authorities closed the church in SHCHYRETS', and people go now to the church in OSTRIIV, near Shchyrets. In Source's opinion responsible for that was also Rev YANIAK, fnu himself who did not strongly enough protest against the closure. He is a weakling, "soft", a completely different man than former priest Rev STAKHURSKYI who was in Shchyrets till 1956. The latter had many quarrels also with his own superiors and finally had to move to Lvov. His successor failed even to secure parochial residence for himself and lived now in a small hut. Rev YANIAK was very subservient to authorities and actually they had no difficulty in closing the church.

After the closure of the church authorities asked people to remove all religious items from the church. They were going to convert it into some sort of storage premises. The population refused to. Individual persons were called to silrada and pressed to remove religious objects but it didn't help either. The people "explained" they couldn't do it because their wives would beat them up. Rev YANIAK instead of keeping at least quiet told people to follow authorities' order. He did the same in the case of religious monuments at roads when authorities asked people to remove them too. People refused to but then one day all monuments and figures were found on the cemetery. All were very indignant about it but couldn't help it!

The church in OSTRIIV is small, situated on a hill, but still always full up on Sundays ^{with} both, young and old.

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Press and Radio

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People read usually "Vilna Ukraina" of Lvov. Practically no one reads Russian papers nor listens to the Soviet radio. Some people have private radio sets and listen to foreign broadcasts. Source himself listened to Christmass Mass in 1964. People inform each other about what they learn from foreign broadcasts and in general talk much more and more freely than before. They are simply no more afraid of Soviet police and the party. The members of the latter and police-informants are generally avoided. People complain openly against the system, mostly at markets and in queues.

Increased Anti-Russian Sentiments

There is a very strong anti-Russian sentiment in the populace and even common people often shout at Russians "why don't you finally go home". Khrushchev personally is not being attacked, on the contrary, often he is being described as the one who had corrected many bad things. There are many jokes about him but Source was unable to tell any. Stalin is now rarely mentioned. (In Shchyrets' Stalin's monument was removed one night from the central place without any explanation,)

There is a general conviction among people incl. the youth that the Ukraine is subjugated and not only the part as such but Russians in general are responsible for that. "The Russians should go home and leave us alone".
There is more and more thinking and talking about the satellites and respective comparisons with Soviet republics are being drawn. People talk quite openly that "we need our own state like, for instance, the Poles have it because
(Russians)
only then they will reckon with us. "

The youth

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The school reform of 1958 forced many young people to stay in Shchyrets' in spite of their efforts to flee to Lvov and other large cities.

The youth speaks Ukrainian and is conscious of their nationality . On the other hand their main concern seems to be "to live well and have nice cloth". Those returning from the army speak Ukrainian.

War

People want and expect changes but are afraid of war. How the future changes are supposed to come about no one knows to tell.

New houses

In Shchyrets as well as in other places many new houses have been built and old ones removed. All this has been done privately. Parcels from the States were the "building factor". Materials were stolen and "otherwise organized". Lately the situation somewhat changed to the worse because there were new restrictions and some people were sentenced to as much as 10 years imprisonment for stealing of wood and other building materials.

Returnees from concentration camps

Source knew Petro ILKIV who operated together with others in Shchyrets-region in the Underground. He was sentenced to 10 years ,after Stalin's death returned to Shchyrets' and works now at the glass factory. Another active underground man - Petro HLUKHOVETSKYI (brother of Ivan H. of Toronto, Canada) was killed. Source mentioned that ~~HLUKHOVETSKYI~~ ILKIV enjoys general respect among the populace. They always treated him friendly and with sympathy. Source remembered also that there were some bunkers in the region of Shchyrets, frequent battles in 1940's ago, but she could not tell ~~the~~ details.

2. Lvov , Ukr SSR

Population

The majority of population is Ukrainian. One hears also Russian in the streets. There are many Jews who are not particularly liked by the population.

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People are very critical of the system and openly complain against authorities. They try to boycott all kind of official celebrations and there is remarkably less pressure on participation in various public parades than it has been 5 or more over 10 years ago. Even school children are now being less engaged for parades.

Prices

Road ticket to Lvov (from Shchyrets) costs 18 kopeek. In Lvov one can buy practically all the necessary, basic food-stuffs and consumer goods. All trade in "American stuffs" is being conducted in special stores and on "barakhovka" (market). Prices at "barakhovka" are higher but it is less convenient-ly located (in Levandovka). The entrance fee to "barakhovka" is 20 kopeek.

There are differences between official and market prices:

- 1 kg of flour ~~officially~~ officially costs 17 kopeek, on market 1 Rubel,
- 1 kg of butter - R 3.50 and 5.- to 6.- respectively,
- 1 kg of meat - 18 and ~~XX~~ 70 kop., respectively,
- 1 woolen dress on market R 60.-
- 1 kerchief (from abroad) R 20.-
- 1 sweater - R 50.-

The greatest demand is for dark materials for suits and dresses. There is much lesser demand for materials with stripes.

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